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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: EPRT BAGHDAD WEST: INTERNALLY DISPLACED RAISING
CONCERNS IN WEST BAGHDAD

Classified By: ePRT West Baghdad Team Leader Mark Powell for reasons 1.
4 (b) and (d)

11. This is an ePRT Baghdad West report.

12. (C) SUMMARY: On February 16, Kadhimiyah District Advisory Council (DAC) Chairman Muslim Salih repeated to ePRT Baghdad West Team Leader (TL) his preference that Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) resident in local clusters return to their places of origin, claiming that IDPs are often involved in illegal activity or seek to squeeze undeserved benefits out of the GOI, or both. As it happened, Salih was to meet momentarily with the leaders of two IDP clusters who had stormed out of his office six days earlier, during a meeting with Embassy RefCoord, TL, Deputy Commanding Officer (DCO) of the partnered Brigade (4/2 ID), and other U.S. Government/U.S. military representatives. TL declined Salih and a late-arriving political candidate's invitation to join their IDP meeting. As TL prepared to depart, Salih requested U.S. Government support for his request to obtain additional personal security from the GOI. END SUMMARY.

MEETING WITH KADHIMIYAH DAC CHAIRMAN

13. (C) In a fortuitous February 16 meeting with ePRT Baghdad West Team Leader (TL), Kadhimiyah District Advisory Council (DAC) Chairman Muslim Salih stated that the leadership of the Musa al-Kadhim and Imam 'Ali Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) clusters were due any minute at the DAC to pursue their request that the GOI grant them the land on which their clusters sit. (NOTE: On February 10, Salih and members of the Council hosted a U.S. Government/U.S. military delegation that included Embassy RefCoord, Baghdad PRT Deputy Team Leaders (TL), ePRT West TL, and 4/2 ID Deputy Commanding Officer (DCO), as well as leaders from the two IDP clusters. That meeting had ended in acrimony when the IDP leaders stormed out after accusing the DAC of indifference to their plight. END NOTE.)

OPPOSITION TO IDPS REMAINING IN KHADIMIYAH CLUSTERS

14. (C) Asked for his reaction to the earlier meeting, Salih replied that "land is not a gift," and that agreeing to the demands would only embolden others to make similar requests. Salih accused the Imam 'Ali cluster leader, "'Abu Ali", of being a "profiteer" who owned residential property elsewhere, but who chooses to remain in Imam 'Ali in hopes of obtaining land or other benefits from the GOI. The Chairman mentioned a case in which local IDPs residing near a public parking garage had played up their misery and lack of alternative living options until the GOI relented and offered them cash to move; they vacated the cluster within 24 hours of being paid, Salih maintained. He repeated his preference that the IDPs "return to where they came from," rather than remain in the clusters.

DAC CHAIRMAN ALLEGES IDPS CONTRIBUTE TO CRIME PROBLEM

15. (C) TL noted that the IDP leaders (and some of their followers residing in the two clusters) had described a seemingly damning lack of attention from the GOI/DAC/Provincial Council (PC) to their conditions. Salih strenuously denied this was the case, noting that the sub-DAC Nahdiyyah leadership ("Mahali," as heard; in English, "local") was most familiar with conditions in the cluster and had reported discreetly to DAC members that "Abu 'Ali" was being disingenuous about conditions there, and about his own personal resources, as well. Salih asserted that illegal activity, including drug trafficking and use, are significant problems in the clusters, contributing to widespread opposition by the DAC members and by many of their constituents to the continued presence of IDPs in the area. Salih implored the TL not to mention this information to the IDP leadership, as he feared "Abu 'Ali," whom he labeled a thug, would retaliate against him.

A SECOND-CHANCE IDP-DAC MEETING ... AND POLITICS

16. (C) Given the IDPs' professed desire to remain where they are, the DAC's clear preference that they return to their place of origin, and the third possible option of facilitating the IDPs' movement to a third place of abode, the TL asked how the dilemma might be resolved. Before Salih could answer, three men entered the office and greeted Salih

warmly. Salih introduced Mu'in al-Kazimi as a former Chairman of the Baghdad PC, and said that al-Kazimi would participate in his imminent meeting with the IDP leaders. Salih and Kazimi enthusiastically invited the TL to join their meeting with the cluster leaders. The TL demurred, saying it was best for the IDPs to meet with their own political leaders without an outsider distorting the dynamic.

Kazimi then asked the TL point-blank "what can you offer these people," and reiterated the invitation to join the meeting. The TL again declined, noting it was a positive step that al-Kazimi and Salih were following up with the IDPs so soon after the last, contentious encounter at the DAC. (NOTE: Kazimi's apparent desire for the TL to commit resources on the spot became clearer a few minutes later when, on the road back to their office, the TL's interpreter pointed out numerous, prominent posters along the streets featuring the visage of parliamentary candidate Mu'in al-Kazimi. END NOTE.)

DAC CHAIRMAN'S SECURITY ASSISTANCE REQUEST

17. (C) On a separate matter, as the TL prepared to depart the DAC Salih made an impassioned plea for U.S. Government support for obtaining additional security for himself and fellow DAC members. Salih went on at some length about what he characterized as sustained GOI stalling on responding to numerous requests for beefed up security. "You've left us behind," he said, referring to the U.S. Government and the U.S. military, adding that DAC members had cooperated with both, and now faced increased threat levels in part because of it. The TL replied that his presence at the DAC, and that of his USG and USF colleagues on February 10 and previously, demonstrated continued U.S. commitment to working with the DAC. He suggested that Salih and other DAC members consider making a joint approach to the GOI regarding their heightened security concerns, and agreed without further commitment to convey the request.